तव कथामृतं तप्तजीवनम्
tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanam

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External Dress is Not Our Concern

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

For *paramahaṁsas*, or *sannyāsīs* in the *vaiṣṇava* order, preaching is the first duty. To preach, such *sannyāsīs* may sometimes accept the symbols of *sannyāsa*, such as the *daṇḍa* and *kamaṇḍalu*, and sometimes they may not. Generally, the *vaiṣṇava sannyāsīs*, being *paramahaṁsas*, are automatically called *bābājīs*, and they do not carry either a *kamaṇḍalu* or *daṇḍa*. Such a *sannyāsī* is free to accept or reject the marks of *sannyāsa*. His only thought is, "Where is there an opportunity to spread Krishna consciousness?" Sometimes the Krishna consciousness movement sends its representative *sannyāsīs* to foreign countries where the *daṇḍa* and *kamaṇḍalu* are not very much appreciated. We send our preachers in ordinary dress to introduce our books and philosophy. Our only concern is to attract people to Krishna consciousness. We may do this in the dress of *sannyāsīs* or in the regular dress of gentlemen. Our only concern is to spread interest in Krishna consciousness.

— Purport to *Bhāg*. 7.13.9

Krishna-katha is Life

Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

What is life? *Kṛṣṇa-kathā* is life.

tava kathāmṛtaṁ tapta-jīvanaṁ
kavibhir īḍitaṁ kalmaṣāpaham
śravaṇa-maṅgalaṁ śrīmad ātataṁ
bhuvi gṛṇanti ye bhūri-dā janāḥ

The nectar of your words and the descriptions of your activities are the life and soul of those suffering in this material world. These narrations, transmitted by learned sages, eradicate one's sinful reactions and bestow good fortune upon whoever hears them. These narrations are broadcast all over the world and are filled with spiritual power. Certainly those who spread the message of Godhead are most munificent. (*Bhāg*. 10.31.9)

Krishna also says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.9): *jīvanaṁ sarva-bhūteṣu* — "I am the life of all that lives." Krishna is our life.

Further he says (*Bg*. 10.9):

mac-cittā mad-gata-prāṇā bodhayantaḥ parasparam
kathayantaś ca māṁ nityaṁ tuṣyanti ca ramanti ca

"The thoughts of my pure devotees dwell in me, their lives are fully devoted to my service, and they derive great satisfaction and bliss

next column ☞

from always enlightening one another and conversing about me."

Prāṇa means life. We cannot give up life, so how can we give up *kṛṣṇa-kathā*? *Kṛṣṇa-kathā* is our life.

— From a lecture, 17 August 1991

Mahaprabhu's Mercy On Gopal Bhatta Goswami

Adapted from Yadunandan Das' Karṇānanda, chapter five

For more information about the book Karṇānanda *and its author Sri Yadunandan Das, see Bindu number 10.*

Srila A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada speaks about the family of Srila Gopal Bhatta Goswami in his purport to Cc. madhya 9.82:

> *Sri Venkata Bhatta was a Vaishnava brahmin and an inhabitant of Sri Ranga Kshetra. He belonged to the disciplic succession of Sri Ramanuja. Sri Ranga is one of the places of pilgrimage in the province of Tamil Nadu. The inhabitants of that province do not retain the name Venkata. It is therefore supposed that Venkata Bhatta did not belong to that province, although he may have been residing there for a very long time. Venkata Bhatta was in a branch of the* Rāmānuja-sampradāya *known as* Vaḍagalai. *He had a brother in the* Rāmānuja-sampradāya *known as Sripad Prabodhananda Saraswati. The son of Venkata Bhatta was later known in the* Gauḍīya-sampradāya *as Gopal Bhatta Goswami, and he established the Radharaman temple in Vrindavan. More information about him may be found in a book known as* Bhakti-ratnākara *by Narahari Chakravarti.*

During Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's visit to Sri Rangam, a Vaishnava known as Venkata Bhatta invited the lord to his home with great respect. He washed Mahaprabhu's feet, and all the members of his family drank the water. Venkata Bhatta completely surrendered to Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Mahaprabhu got some pleasure there, and stayed a few days in his house, accepting the meals cooked by Venkata. When the Lord finished eating, Venkata Bhatta and his family happily took the remnants. He offered Mahaprabhu betel-leaf and humbly requested him to stay in his place during the four months of the rainy season, as it would be difficult for Prabhu to go on a pilgrimage in the rainy season. Mahaprabhu agreed to his request, which greatly pleased Bhatta and his family members. During the period of Prabhu's stay, Venkata carefully tended to the Lord. Prabhu gladly spent these four months in his house by taking bath in the Kaveri River, visiting the temple of Ranganatha, and singing and dancing with his companions.

Seeing that his young son Gopal Bhatta was a sincere devotee, Venkata engaged the boy in serving the Lord. The service Gopal rendered to Mahaprabhu was beyond description. The boy was knowledgeable and had a fair complexion. He spoke gently and was very handsome. His arms were long, reaching down to the knees, his navel was deep, and he was very gentle in his nature. His chest was broad. His eyes looked like the petals of a lotus, and his palms and feet were reddish. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was pleased with his dutiful service. Even before being asked, he would perform every task for the Lord's pleasure. Prabhu was so satisfied by his service that he blessed his whole family along with the servants and maidservants. One day while Mahaprabhu was taking rest, Sri Gopal Bhatta was massaging his legs. Being fully satisfied by the boy's devotion, Mahaprabhu began to speak confidentially to him. Lord Chaitanya addressed Gopal Bhatta as an intimate associate of Srimati Radharani, and Bhatta addressed Mahaprabhu as Vrajendranandana himself, appearing this time giving up the blue color of Krishna and assuming the complexion of Radharani. While speaking about these matters, they both became absorbed in ecstasy. Returning to their external senses, Prabhu advised Gopal Bhatta that he should take care of his parents for some days and then he should go to Vrindavan to meet Rupa and Sanatan.

Mahaprabhu gave Gopal Bhatta some pieces of cloth that he had worn, which Gopal accepted with reverence, touching them to his head and bowing to the feet of Mahaprabhu. Prabhu lifted him and embraced him to his bosom. He then gave some important instructions to the boy. Mahaprabhu said, "Listen, Gopal! In the future a young brahmin named Srinivasa will come to Vrindavan from Gauda. This young man will be directly empowered by me. You should hand over these pieces of cloth to him,

entrust him with one lakh [100,000] books describing the glories of Vraja, and send him back to Gauda. Tell Rupa and Sanatan that Srinivas is a manifestation of my own energy."

Hearing these confidential instructions, Gopal Bhatta Goswami said, "As you desire, my Lord," and bowed his head at the Lord's feet, offering full prostrated obeisances in the dust.

Then Mahaprabhu said, "This is my personal instruction for you. Later I will send you my personal *āsana* [seat] and one *ḍora* [necklace made of cloth]. You should sit on the *asana*, wear the *ḍora* around your neck, and take Srinivas, who is *prema-murti*, the embodiment of love, into your confidence."

With great reverence, Srila Gopal Bhatta Goswami received the items given to him by Mahaprabhu and secured them in a hiding place with utmost care. As described by Kaviraja Gosai in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Sri Bhatta Goswami later went to Vrindavan, met Rupa and Sanatan Goswamis, and remained with them.

mahāprabhura āgamane vikhyāta yāra pāṭa
ke bujhite pāre sei caitanyera nāṭa

hena se saubhāgya yāra kahane nā yāya
yāra gṛhe rahe prabhu ānande sadāya

It is impossible to express the good fortune of Srila Gopal Bhatta Goswami, whose home is eternally famous because Mahaprabhu stayed there with great joy. Who can understand the behavior of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu? (verses 147-148)

sei se gopāla bhaṭṭa āmāra hṛdaye
sadā sphurti ha-uka mora ei vāñcā haye

My desire is that Gopal Bhatta Goswami may always be manifest in my heart. (149)

avirata galaye aśru yāhāra nayane
śrī aṅgete sveda dhārā bahe anukṣaṇe

pracura pulaka kampa sadā anivāra
kaṇṭha gharghara kare tāte nāmera sañcāra

hare kṛṣṇa nāma mātra jihvāya uccārite
ha ha ha ha ha ha śabda kare avirate

ihā balitei yiṅho haya acetana
sei gopāla kara more kṛpā nirīkṣaṇa

A cascade of tears incessantly pours from his eyes and streams of perspiration come from his beautiful body. His hairs stand on end along with uncontrollable waves of shivering as he chants. When he tries to pronounce "*hare kṛṣṇa*", his voice becomes choked, and out of ecstatic love he can only say "*ha ha ha ha ha ha*" and fall unconscious. May the merciful glance of that Gopal Bhatta Goswami fall upon me. (150-153)

vṛndāvane khyāti yiṅho śrī guṇa mañjarī
sei se gopāla bhaṭṭa samāna mādhurī

kali nare kṛpā kari hailā avatīrṇa
madhura rasa āsvādiyā karilā vistīrṇa

hena se madhura rase yāhāra āsvāda
vitaraṇa hetu jīve karilā prasāda

prema-bhakti rase yiṅho rahe anibāra
āsvādana kailā yiṅho aneka prakāra

Srila Gopal Bhatta, who is glorified as Guna Manjari in *vṛndāvana-līlā*, has descended to this world with all of his transcendental sweet qualities to bestow his mercy to the human beings influenced by Kali. He relished the sweet mellow of the divine conjugal pastimes of Their Lordships and spread the same in this universe in order to bestow his mercy upon the conditioned living entities. He is fixed in the mellows of *prema-bhakti* and constantly relishes its varigatedness. (154-157)

— Translated from the edition edited by Hari-bhakta Das. Published by Giridhari Lal Goswami. Gaurabda 506.

The Meeting of Parshuram and Lord Ramachandra

Part Three

Rev. A. G. Atkins

For more about Reverend Atkins, see Bindu 116.

In our last issue, Lord Ramachandra spoke sweet words to pacify Parshuram, who was angry at hearing that the sacred bow of Lord Shiva had been broken. Lakshman, however, was unable to tolerate the arrogant words of Parshuram. He smiled at the fearsome brahmin, but spoke in a sarcastic and chivalrous way that infuriated him, then concluded:

"I pray you forgive, rev'rend sir what I've uttered
"Unworthily, seeing your guise."
Parshuram at these words said in deep angry tones,
Visvamitra-ward turning his eyes:

"Listen here, son of Kusik*, if this child is an ass;
"He will ruin his clan, his own doom bring to pass;

* *Kausik, son of Kusik, another name of Viswamitra.*

"On the bright Solar race he's a blot and a stain,
"Wholly ignorant, reckless, ungoverned and vain;

"He'll be dead in a trice should he not call a halt,
"And I loudly protest it will not be my fault;

"If you'd save him, then let him not go to such length;
"Of my great glory tell him, my fury and strength."

But Lakshman replied, "Sir, no need while you live
"Of another the tale of your greatness to give;

"You have often yourself told us with your own mouth
"Of your many great powers and doings, forsooth;

"But if you're not satisfied, tell us again;
"Don't be angry, nor suffer so much needless pain;

"You are brave, dauntless, patient by nature and usage,
"It does not become you to give such abusage.

"Great heroes in battle do many great deeds,
"But themselves do not tell of their doing;
"Tis cowards who, seeing their foes, begin loudly
"To brag, with the battle ensuing.

"So you are now shouting to make me afraid,
"By frequently calling up Death to your aid."

At these harsh words of Lakshman, who would not relax,
Parshuram spoke and flourished his terrible axe:

"Let no one say now that the blame is on me,
"For this harsh-speaking youngster deserves death, I see;

"As I thought of his youth, more than once he was saved;
"But now truly he dies for the way he's behaved."

Viswamitra said, "Sir, your forgiveness he needs;
"Holy men give no thought to youth's good or ill deeds."

Said the other, "I'm angry by nature; I hold
"Here my axe, and the foe of my master* behold;

"So far, tho' he gave cheeky answers, I've spared
"Him from death, Viswamitra, since you I regard;

"If not, with my axe I'd have cut ere this thro' him,
"And paid to my master with ease the debt due him."

Viswamitra said laughingly down in his heart,
"He thinks Vishnu a Kshatriya foe;
"Rama broke the bow like sugar-cane, but the truth
"Ignorant Parshuram does not know."

- continued in the next issue -

— *The Ramayana of Tulsidas*. Shri Krishna Janmasthan Seva-sansthan. Mathura, India. 1987. Pages 341-343.

* *Shiva, whose bow was broken.*

The Highest Ecstasy

Srila Rupa Goswami's Padyāvalī, text 240

saṅgama-viraha-vikalpe varam iha viraho na saṅgaman tasya
ekaḥ sa eva saṅge tri-bhuvanam api tan-mayaṁ virahe

[Radharani says:] Separation from Krishna is better than meeting him. When I meet him there is only one Krishna, but when I am separated from him the three worlds become filled with Krishnas.

— Translated by Sri Kusakratha Das. Krishna Library. Culver City, California. 1989.

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